

Minutes of the Forum on Transportation Investment

9/27/04

Professional Contact Meeting

Attendees – Ron Binggeli, Dave Butzier, Byron Keely, Charlie Rountree, Dave Carlson, Gloria Mabbutt, Paul Sudmeier, Jane Gorsuch, Dave Ekern, Jim Ross, Tom Warne and recorder Pat Nelson

Tom Warne reviewed the Goals and Objectives for the Forum participants and reviewed the proposed meeting agenda. He stated that more participants may join the group and another round of invitations will be sent for the next meeting. The entire process will take approximately 15 months.

Tom Warne encouraged participants to ask questions and stressed that there are no preconceived answers or outcomes.

Dave Ekern briefly described this process as a “work in progress”, stating that the ITD Board first began discussing legislative proposals that deal with an emerging set of transportation challenges that turned into ways to deal with these issues. Things like local option taxes, fee structures changes because of routine maintenance and operation costs, capital investment changes, trying to meet the public transportation needs, etc. The Board felt that we needed to get a cross section of the people engaged in transportation as well as that that hold a variety of views from across the state involved in this process to help answer some of the questions. Mr. Ekern stressed that there are not pre-conceived outcomes but that this is definitely a “work in progress”.

The group discussed the types of jobs and industry that may drive the need for the transportation systems. AASHTO drives the standards for many transportation improvements. Some improvements are more locally driven. The group agreed that the goals for this forum was not to determine what industry would drive the economy in the state, however the transportation needs of the industries should be considered in order to make informed decisions.

Tourists traveling in the state were not included in the population numbers presented earlier in the day, but the group agreed that the additional motorists need to be considered when thinking about the roadway systems as well as air traffic and rail. One example given included the growth in population as well as tourism in Valley County. Only two roads lead in and out of McCall, and trucks must travel up highway 55 to serve McCall.

Another example of under designing would be Eagle Road, where traffic forecasts are now double what were planned for when the road was built.

It was also noted that there are also 16 counties that are losing population and this should also be considered as well as those areas that are increasing in population.

Another issue of concern was the amount of federal land in the state that is not funded with ISTEA. Some federal forested areas are maintained in part, by private forest companies.

Transit was also discussed as a mode of transportation that needed to be included in the transportation system.

Tom Warne explained that during this meeting the group needs to get organized, electing a chair and vice chair to provide leadership; review the content of the meetings; decide what information needs to be reviewed and presented; review the list of meetings and decide on the pre-meeting schedule; and then have a discussion about some of the traps we want to avoid and some of the issues we want to make sure are on the table and gather information for our own knowledge.

After discussion on electing a Chair and Vice Chair, the group agreed that Dave Ekern would be the group “Convener” rather than the Chairman for the next meeting. At the next meeting, the group may be a bit larger and more able to elect a Chairman.

The group discussed the information to be reviewed. Tom suggested gathering existing reports from the TRB and ASHTO that were discussed earlier in the day. Gloria suggested that when web sites can be used to review documents, a link could be sent in lieu of the printed document.

Tom Warne stated that the purpose of the second meeting is to review current financial tools; how to use the current funding streams as well as explore new ideas. The TIFIA and GARVEE Bonds were examples of financing tools and not new funding streams. Suggestions from the participants included looking at local Highway Districts and the private sector for capital improvement financing.

The group discussed possible reports to be used during the deliberations of the FTI. A summary of those that would be offered is found at the end of these minutes.

The group discussed trying to obtain information on the various funding sources for each state. Some type of chart that illustrates the various sources would be helpful. This subject is covered under meeting #4.

There was some concern expressed about the meeting objectives and how they were stated. In some cases they seemed to indicate a presupposing of outcomes. Tom will work on softening the language to reflect that there is no preconceived outcome of the individual meetings.

It was stated that public transit doesn't have access to revenues secured by the constitution as highways do. Funding for public transit needs to be shown as primarily federal with some local funds in a few communities. Perhaps data from national sources needed to be reviewed by the committee.

It was suggested that Idaho be compared with other states that use funding such as local option, state taxes and federal funding to see where Idaho falls.

It was noted that if the fees for vehicles under 7500 GVW were at the national average, there would be \$220 more million dollars in the highway trust fund. These comments relate to both meetings #2 and #4.

Ron Binggeli was asked to provide a projected cost to provide public transportation in the state that would also include funding medical transportation and tourism needs. He also suggested that school transportation be included in that projected cost.

Byron Keely stated that he had information on freight and aviation figures to provide to the group.

The group discussed who the “non-state” entities referred to in Meeting #3. It was agreed that #3 meeting would include private business sectors as well as cities, counties and highway district representation.

The group agreed on the need for recognizing the requirements of industry and new technologies that keep businesses competitive in the global markets. They believe that the group may want more information to more fully understand the needs of private industry. Gloria Mabbutt stated that she may have some additional private sector information that could be helpful.

Byron Keely also suggested that tribal interests as well as the federal land holders should be considered “non-state” entities.

It was suggested that after we get the assumptions down, we look at the separate regions in the state and make decisions and recommendations based on the commerce and tourism in that region, keeping in mind that not every point will be an issue with the legislation. After the discussions, we could come out with a number of policy challenges.

In the discussion of Meeting #5, the group was assured that the LRTP was still a work in progress. Dave Ekern stated that the plan was originally focused on corridors. ITD is trying to look at the needs studies and, based on AASHTO standards, see what it will take to bring the roadways up to standards. ITD is also asking if those standard policies verify, support, or contradict what ITD hears from local venues; do the plans meet expectations?

The group discussed the meeting content and process and how it seems to be inconsistent with the charter. The meeting content list assumes we need new tools and revenue sources before the committee does the final analysis. Meeting #5 is the same misstatement that is in number 2 – like a foregone conclusion that we’re supposed to validate. Tom Warne suggested that Meeting #5 be changed to “determine if the LRTP can be realized with the current financial tools or if new revenue tools are required. It was suggested that the LRTP be changed to the reviewing the LRTP planning effort be accepted.

It was also suggested that the green meeting sheet be retooled to more closely match the pink charter. Tom Warne will reword Meeting #5 and revise language in Meetings #1 and #2.

The group agreed that the revised documents be e-mailed to members of the committee. Minutes will be shortened to contain major topics, points talked about and recommendations reached, not verbatim.

The group discussed the next meeting dates and decided that the pre-meeting to the general policy group meeting will be a conference call approximately 1.5 hours in length. The first date will be the week of January 3, 2005. Dave Ekern will call the first meeting and set the agenda and materials to be discussed.

Dave Ekern added that the first five meetings will be about learning and getting reactions to the information; the next two will be making recommendations. Tom Warne added that the Chairs of both committees will craft the agendas and rely on this group for the data gathering and analysis.

The next meeting will focus on funding streams.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM

Volunteered to provide information for the Committee

Ron Binggeli – Public Transit information on the national level; IWG information

Byron Keely – LHTAC Description of funding – revenue streams for legislature information
Freight and Air traffic information

Gloria Mabbutt – Association of Idaho Cities report for Commerce Department
Private sector information on business with new transportation technology

Tom Warne - Report from University at Berkley, Marti Wacks report –local funding examples
TRB report

Dave Ekern – ITD legislative presentation to JFAC – explanation of funding flows for ITD
TIFIA and GARVEE Bonds – ITD economic department
AASHTO/ITD report

Dave Carlson – Gas and other taxes used for transportation – comparison by state